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Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004

Information document

Summary

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests comprises 14 international organizations, institutions and secretariats. Its main objectives are to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and its member countries and to enhance cooperation and coordination among Partnership members on forest-related activities.

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 describes the Partnership's collaborative initiatives carried out in 2003, especially regarding the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. In addition, the report highlights the Partnership's involvement in other forest-related initiatives and processes.

Since its establishment, the Partnership has embarked on five joint initiatives: the establishment of an online searchable database on funding sources for sustainable forest management; work to streamline reporting on forests; efforts to foster a common understanding of forest-related definitions; information dissemination through the Partnership's web site; and cooperation, interface and communication with a wide range of other partners in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network.

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The year 2003 saw significant and increasing collaborative activities, including co-sponsoring and co-organizing meetings and workshops, especially on national forest programmes, criteria and indicators, wildfires, mangroves, forest restoration and projects in low forest cover countries. This cooperation provides the needed link from international recommendations to activities of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and enhances action on the ground.

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I. Introduction

1. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests was established in 2001 to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and its member countries and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues.

2. At its first session, the Forum invited the Partnership to report on its progress at each session. The present report is the third to be presented to the Forum.[1]

3. The document focuses on major joint initiatives carried out in 2003 and provides an update on the Partnership's collaborative and cooperative activities in support of United Nations Forum on Forests, especially regarding the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). In addition, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 highlights the Partnership's involvement in other forest-related initiatives and its interaction with a wide range of partners and stakeholders through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network.

II. Background

4. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests supports the United Nations Forum on Forests and fosters increased cooperation and coordination on forests. It consists of 14 members (see box) that have substantial capacity, programmes and resources to support the United Nations Forum on Forests process, in particular the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Collectively, building on the comparative advantage of its members, the Partnership supports the implementation of sustainable forest management worldwide.

Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

World Bank

World Conservation Union (IUCN)

5. The Partnership has adopted a focal agency system to facilitate coordination of its work. Its terms of reference and working modalities are described in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Policy Document.[2]

6. The Partnership has been chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and supported by the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat. During 2003, FAO, UNEP and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) seconded staff to the Forum secretariat.

III. Collaborative Partnership on Forests joint initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests

7. Since the establishment of the Partnership, members have embarked on five joint initiatives: an online searchable database on funding sources for sustainable forest management; work to streamline forest-related reporting; efforts to foster a common understanding of forest-related definitions; information dissemination through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site and other outreach activities; and cooperation, interface and communication with a wide range of partners in the Partnership Network.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests sourcebook on funding for sustainable forest management

8. Lack of funding often hampers the implementation of sustainable forest management, particularly in developing countries. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests, with the support of its Network partners and the National Forest Programme Facility, launched the Collaborative Partnership on Forests sourcebook on funding for sustainable forest management in December 2002 to make information on types, levels and sources of foreign and domestic financing more accessible through an online searchable database. It currently includes 360 data entries and information on development of project proposals. It is available on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site (www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-sourcebook) and on CD-ROM in English, French and Spanish.

9. In 2003, the Sourcebook was refined, based on user feedback, and was promoted through various means. Future plans include expansion of the database, promotional activities and an online forum that will enable users to explore project ideas and funding opportunities; exchange of knowledge and information, including on success stories; and identification of sources of information and potential support.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests task force on streamlining forest-related reporting

10. Concerned over the number of requests to report to international and regional bodies and instruments related to forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests invited Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to work towards harmonizing and streamlining reporting.

11. In response, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting was established in July 2002. Members are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Climate Monitoring Centre and the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

12. The Task Force has developed an Internet portal that provides easy access to information countries submitted to international forest-related processes. The portal is now available in English, French and Spanish. The Task Force has also reviewed current international reporting requirements and processes to identify potential areas to streamline reporting. The Task Force concluded that considerable potential exists for developing joint requests to countries for information on their forest resources, products and services and on their policy and institutional frameworks. Streamlining reporting to forest-related conventions and instruments was seen as more challenging, at least in the short term, partly because schedules and procedures have been fixed for the next few years. The Task Force recommended that more use be made of existing information, especially when developing new reporting guidelines, and that work to harmonize definitions continue.

13. Encouraged by the positive feedback at the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Task Force is now seeking to improve access and availability of country information. Building on the portal, it is developing a proposed common information framework which would facilitate use of existing data and information on forests. Easy access to information organized in a systematic way, for example, according to the common thematic areas (criteria) of sustainable forest management, would assist countries to compile and manage information for reporting purposes. Similarly, such access would help organizations and instruments to design requests, prepare reporting schedules and better use information. An interim report outlining the concept and benefits of a common information framework was tabled at the meeting of the Forum's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting. The group recognized the substantial work that Collaborative Partnership on Forests members had undertaken and understood that efforts to further develop the framework was contingent upon securing funds.

14. Many Partnership members assist countries to strengthen their capacity for data collection, processing, and reporting, including through improved in-country coordination, but this is an area requiring further attention. The Task Force plans to tackle this aspect as one of its top priorities.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests initiative on forest-related definitions

15. In order to foster a common understanding of forest-related concepts, terms and definitions, FAO, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, CIFOR, IUFRO and UNEP organized two expert meetings in 2002. Follow-up activities include harmonizing the core definitions in French and Spanish, standardizing terminology on forest carbon and biomass, and harmonizing terminology related to natural and managed forests, planted forests and trees outside forests.

16. IUFRO recently developed an online multilingual glossary of carbon-related forest terminology (see www.iufro.org). Definitions are also an integral part of the global Forest Resources Assessment process led by FAO, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe, ITTO, the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and a number of convention secretariats.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site, promotional material and other outreach activities

17. Launched in December 2002, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site contains information about the Partnership, its activities, joint initiatives and the Partnership Network. It also includes a directory of international forest-related organizations, which is scheduled to be updated in 2004. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat maintains the web site with the help of FAO, which maintains subsites on the Partnership Sourcebook and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests portal on forest reporting.

18. The Partnership organized two side events in 2003, one during the third session of the Forum, in May 2003, and another during the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in December 2003. It also displayed information material on its activities at the sixteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, held in March 2003 and the twelfth World Forestry Congress, held in September 2003.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network

19. In 2002, the Partnership established the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network, which is open to all interested partners, to facilitate cooperation and communication.[3]

20. Participation in the Network significantly increased during 2003 and currently consists of representatives from intergovernmental organizations (74), Governments (68), indigenous people's organizations (9), non-governmental organizations (61), private-sector entities (10), scientific and technical community (24), small forest landowner associations (3), women's organizations (2), trade unions (1), youth organizations (10) and individuals who have not identified a specific affiliation (18).

21. The Network met twice in 2003, focusing on how to operationalize its objectives which are to:

- Facilitate stakeholders involvement in the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests;
- Enhance communication among a wide range of stakeholders;

- Improve collaboration and cooperation among organizations, institutions, instruments and processes working on forest-related matters.

22. The Network suggested information-sharing tools, which are now in use, including the Forest-L and regular Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network updates. It also stressed the need to transmit views expressed at the local level to the national and international levels, and vice versa.

IV. Support of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members for the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and for enhanced cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues

23. This section highlights examples of collaborative activities during 2003 to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues. They are by no means all inclusive.

24. As part of its support, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members help to draft documents for Forum sessions. Focal agencies for elements for the fourth session (FAO, ITTO, the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat, IUFRO, CIFOR and ICRAF) provided the substantive input to the reports of the Secretary-General.

Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes

25. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have two major initiatives in support of national forest programmes — the Programme on Forests and the National Forest Programme Facility.

26. Hosted by the World Bank, the Programme on Forests has been working in Cameroon, Costa Rica, Guyana, Malawi and Viet Nam. During 2003, the Programme, with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, published a summary of IPF/IFF proposals for action,[4] which is being translated into French and Spanish with the support of the National Forest Programme Facility.

27. The National Forest Programme Facility, hosted by FAO, is a partnership of countries, bilateral agencies and international organizations, including FAO, CIFOR and the World Bank. The Facility promotes the increased involvement of civil society in the national forest policy dialogue by providing grants to forest stakeholders and offering access to information and training on key topics. It currently assists 36 countries around the world to develop and implement national forest programmes.

28. CIFOR, ITTO, the World Bank Programme on Forests, FAO and the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat supported the Workshop on Decentralization, Federal Systems in Forestry and National Forest Programmes, a United Nations Forum on Forests country-led initiative that was co-sponsored by the Governments of Indonesia and Switzerland, co-organized by several other countries and held from 27 to 30 April 2004 in Interlaken, Switzerland. The United Nations Development Programme supports decentralization and local governance processes by addressing

policy reforms and development planning, promoting effective legal frameworks and mobilizing resources for use at the regional and local levels.

Promoting public participation

29. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members work at the international level to facilitate stakeholder participation in forest-related policy dialogues and at the national level to support country efforts to advance participatory processes in forest policy, planning and management.

30. Partnership members interact with a wide range of partners and stakeholders through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network (see sect. III above). Several Partnership members include multi-stakeholder dialogues in the sessions of their governing bodies and have developed mechanisms to consult and encourage the input of civil society in their deliberations.

31. Some Partnership members, such as IUCN, are particularly active in facilitating the participation of civil society in regional and international forest processes. With Forest Trends, IUCN is a founding co-chair of the Civil Society Advisory Group of the International Tropical Timber Council and, in 2003, worked closely with ITTO to enhance the input of civil society organizations in projects and Council sessions.

32. IUCN, in close collaboration with the World Bank, facilitated the involvement of civil society from East, West and Southern Africa in the African Forest Law Enforcement and Government ministerial conference that was held in Yaoundé, from 13 to 16 October 2003 (see para. 37 below).

33. FAO promotes participatory processes in national forest programmes, including as a partner to the National Forest Programme Facility and through its technical cooperation programme. In November 2003, FAO organized a second meeting, which focused on developing methods for the qualitative assessment of stakeholder participation in national forest programmes.

34. Public participation is encouraged in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national, subregional and regional levels. In this regard, a bottom-up approach was used to elaborate 68 national action plans under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and 88 national biodiversity strategy and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Moreover, 18 parties to the latter Convention were in a position to submit interim drafts to the secretariat.

35. At the national level, ITTO is establishing civil society and private-sector partnerships to promote sustainable forest management and certification in the field, particularly within the framework of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and the Asia Forest Partnership, which several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members support, including the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, IUCN, FAO and CIFOR.

Deforestation and forest degradation

36. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members carry out many activities to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, including promoting sustainable forest management practices through legal reviews, national forest programmes,

awareness-raising and institutional strengthening; developing guidelines for forest management; and helping to establish model and demonstration forests.

37. Several Partnership members, including the World Bank, IUCN, CIFOR, ITTO and FAO, were actively involved in the ministerial meeting of African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance process, held in Yaoundé, in October 2003 (see para. 32 above). The African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation through strengthening forest law enforcement and good governance. IUCN, the World Bank's Programme on Forests, CIFOR, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat and other Collaborative Partnership on Forests members will continue to work together in the follow-up.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

38. Where applicable, all Partnership members take into account the importance and relevance of traditional forest-related knowledge in policy and project activities.

39. Over the past few years, the Convention on Biological Diversity has addressed traditional knowledge through its Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on article 8 (j) and Related Provisions. At its third meeting, held in Montreal, Canada, from 8 to 12 December 2003, the group discussed the relevance of traditional knowledge to sustainable use and conservation of forest biological diversity and addressed the state and trends of knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. ITTO worked with the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat to incorporate traditional forest-related knowledge into its relevant activities.

Forest-related scientific knowledge

40. Several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members collaborate to improve the scientific basis for sustainable forest management. CIFOR, ICRAF and IUFRO are actively supporting basic research efforts and, along with other Partnership members, are supporting research on environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of forests, forest policy and forest management.

41. IUFRO, in collaboration with international and national forestry organizations, is actively involved in the Global Forest Information Service and hosts the Service's Management Unit. The Global Forest Information Service is an Internet gateway that provides access to information on forest resources at a global scale where users can locate maps, datasets, web resources, journal articles, books and other resources related to forests. The Service currently holds more than 120,000 metadata records.

42. FAO, IUFRO and CIFOR cooperate in strengthening forestry research in many developing countries through support to training and education and assistance to research networks in Africa, Asia and, as of 2005, in Latin America. A review of forest-related research capacity in Eastern Africa will be published in January 2004.

Forest health and productivity

43. Considerable collaboration takes place among Partnership members in forest health and productivity, particularly related to wildfires.

44. FAO, ITTO, IUCN and others, including the Global Fire Monitoring Centre, are exploring approaches to promote the participation of local communities in fire management and forest fire prevention. They are also working to secure policy reform at the national and regional levels to provide a legislative and economic basis for controlling harmful anthropogenic forest fires.

45. UNEP, FAO, ECE, the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat and the World Bank are involved in the Working Group on Wildland Fires which operates under the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction. The Working Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre have established joint regional wildland fire networks to intensify collaboration and information exchange globally between forest fire experts. CIFOR, ITTO and IUCN, among others, collaborate with the networks.

46. ITTO and FAO supported the third International Wildland Fire Conference and Summit, held in Sydney, Australia, from 3 to 6 October 2003. FAO, ECE and the International Labour Organization organized a conference on forest fire management and international cooperation in fire emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans and adjoining regions of the Near East and Central Asia, from 30 March to 4 April 2004, in Antalya, Turkey.

47. Project FireFight South-East Asia, based at CIFOR and operated jointly by IUCN and WWF, was successfully concluded in mid-2003. It was widely recognized for its unique expertise in community involvement in fire management, the economics of fire use and the legal aspects of forest fires. Building on its success, IUCN, with the assistance of WWF, is implementing a joint ITTO-Swiss Government-funded pre-project to extend Project FireFight to other critical regions and countries, in particular West Africa, the Mekong region and the Northern Andes. In this regard, the West African Pre-project Workshop was held on 22 and 23 May 2003 in Kumasi, Ghana. A full project proposal for the region has now been submitted to ITTO. Furthermore, IUCN, WWF and The Nature Conservancy launched the Global Fire Partnership at the fifth IUCN World Parks Congress, held in Durban, South Africa, from 8 to 17 September 2003.

Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

48. Most Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have been involved in work on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management over the past decade. Major goals include supporting regional and international criteria and indicator processes, fostering the development and use of criteria and indicators at national and forest management unit levels, encouraging collaboration among countries and among processes and building capacity.

49. FAO and ITTO, with the financial support of the Governments of Finland and the United States of America, organized the International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: the way forward, which was held from 3 to 7 February 2003, in Guatemala City. The Conference recommended a wide range of actions for consideration by countries and international bodies, including the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourth session. It acknowledged seven common thematic areas for sustainable forest management on the basis of criteria adopted in the nine processes. As a follow-up, FAO and ITTO organized an expert consultation, hosted by the Philippines from 2 to 5 March 2004 in Cebu City, to improve cooperation and communication among

processes; enhance common understanding of definitions; and discuss approaches and methods for data collection and sharing related to criteria and indicators.

50. Other collaborative efforts include the Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building for Forest Scientists in Latin America on Criteria and Indicators, Auditing of Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification which was organized by the IUFRO Special Programme for Developing Countries from 12 to 15 May 2003, in Turrialba, Costa Rica. Collaborators included the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, CIFOR and FAO.

51. In addition, the Convention on Biological Diversity and Global Environment Facility (GEF) secretariats are supporting the development of indicators for biological diversity, including for forest biological diversity. An expert group meeting was held in Montreal from 10 to 12 February 2003 that focused on the principles for developing national-level indicators for monitoring purposes, and provided advice on suitable indicators for each thematic area to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including forests.

Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests

52. Several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members are addressing issues related to valuation, full-cost internalization of wood products and forest revenue collection systems. They are also examining the potential of forests to improve the livelihood and well-being of hundreds of million of forest-dependent people who live in extreme poverty.

53. The World Bank organized, in collaboration with other partners, the International Workshop on Reform of Forest Fiscal Systems, held at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., from 19 to 21 October 2003. The workshop brought together 21 participants from seven countries (Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Nicaragua) to promote learning and engage in discussions on the political economy of forest fiscal reforms. As a follow-up to discussions, the World Bank Programme on Forests is supporting an informal learning group that will continue to share experiences with forest fiscal reform processes.

54. In partnership with national, regional and international institutions, FAO has published a field manual for market analysis and development to enhance community-based enterprises. This work also supports GEF/World Bank projects in Latin America.

55. The World Bank and other partners hosted a Forest Investment Forum at World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., from 22 to 23 October 2003. Several Partnership members attended the Forum, which brought together senior executives from leading national and multinational forest product companies.

56. IUCN, the Programme on Forests, and others collaborated to organize a workshop entitled Economic Incentives for Land Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management, held in Bogotá, from 28 to 30 January 2004. The purpose of the workshop was to share information about related initiatives and research around the world and to draw lessons that would help Colombia to develop its new forest law.

57. Through close consultation, the World Bank, UNDP, IUCN and others have developed a poverty-focused conservation approach that optimizes conservation and livelihood benefits and emphasizes poverty reduction and social justice. Case

studies developed by the Programme on Forests and others support this approach, as does a IUCN/UNDP initiative aimed at learning lessons from activities in East Africa on the importance of natural resources to local livelihoods.

58. CIFOR, ICRAF, IUCN and WWF established the Rainforest Challenge Partnership to enhance the productivity, sustainability and diversity of landscape mosaics in the humid tropics, so as to meet the needs of rural poor people, while maintaining the flow of environmental goods and services and conserving forest biodiversity. Criteria for site selection are being defined and sites will be chosen in 2004.

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems

59. Several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members carry out activities related to protected forest areas, transboundary conservation areas and conservation in forests outside protected areas. Some Partnership members are also engaged in activities related to unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems, such as mangroves.

60. At the fifth IUCN World Parks Congress (see para. 47 above), the focus was on providing new commitments and policy guidance for protected areas worldwide. In addition to IUCN, several Partnership members participated in the Congress. A number of issues relevant to forests were addressed, including the links between protected areas and forest landscape restoration in alleviating poverty. The Congress also built on the outcomes of the IUCN/ITTO workshop on increasing the effectiveness of transboundary conservation areas in tropical forests, held from 17 to 21 February 2003 in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand, with the participation of several Partnership members. ITTO is currently implementing 10 transboundary conservation projects that cover 10.3 million hectares of tropical forests.

61. UNDP is working on 29 GEF-funded projects on forest conservation in 27 countries. During 2003, UNDP analysed UNDP-GEF experiences and lessons learned in implementing 40 forest conservation projects around the world. Two projects in which some Partnership members are involved are the Meso-America forest conservation project, supported by GEF, the World Bank and UNDP, and the World Bank's corridor project in rainforest regions in Brazil.

62. ITTO continues to promote the conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable management of mangroves, in collaboration with relevant organizations and in the context of the ITTO Mangrove Work Plan 2002-2006. ITTO, in collaboration with the UNEP World Climate Monitoring Centre, FAO and others, will be updating the World Mangrove Atlas. Work will also be undertaken to evaluate existing methodologies and guidelines for assessing the qualitative aspects of mangroves, as well as for the formulation of criteria and indicators for their sustainable management, and to develop new ones.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions

63. The main activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests related to this element are carried out by the its Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting and efforts to harmonize forest-related definitions (see sect. III above).

Related initiatives include support to a country-led and organization-led initiative, forest assessments and a joint forest questionnaire.

64. FAO, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat and ITTO supported the country-led initiative on Lessons Learned in the Assessment of the Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action which was hosted by Italy, co-sponsored by several countries, and held in Viterbo from 17 to 20 March 2003. Several Partnership members participated in the meeting.

65. Several Partnership members also participated in the meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 12 December 2003.

66. The FAO global Forest Resources Assessment provides a comprehensive report on forest resources, their management and uses every 10 years. The 2000 Assessment will be updated in 2005 and will use the common themes of criteria for sustainable forest management as a reporting framework. FAO and ITTO, with participation from UNEP, co-sponsored a meeting of some 120 national correspondents to the Forest Resources Assessment held in Rome from 17 to 21 November 2003. The meeting discussed contents, guidelines and country reporting to the 2005 Assessment.

67. ITTO, ECE, FAO and the Statistical Office of the European Communities collaborated in the further development of the Joint Forest Statistics Questionnaire to enhance accuracy and reliability of information on the forest sector.

68. In 2004, UNEP will initiate the Second Assessment of the World's Remaining Closed Forests, with partners, including some Partnership members. ITTO will also compile a report on the status of forest management in the tropics, based on reports from member countries, using the ITTO criteria and indicators.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

69. Several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members are involved in activities related to this element, including organizing workshops, undertaking studies and supporting projects in countries with low forest cover. Furthermore, the governing bodies of both UNEP and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification adopted decisions in 2003 to strengthen their efforts to support countries that fall within this category (see sect. V below).

70. UNEP, FAO, ICRAF and the secretariat of the Tehran process organized an international workshop for low forest cover countries in the Near East and Africa in Mali, in January 2004, with the theme of how to translate proposals for action into implementation. FAO, in collaboration with UNEP and others, completed case studies (on Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mali, Namibia, Oman and Tunisia) for the meeting and conducted three regional workshops (two in the Near East and one in Africa) to develop proposals to enhance the role of planted forests, trees outside forests and urban and peri-urban forests in achieving sustainable forest management in low forest cover countries.

71. Some Partnership members are supporting land degradation assessments. GEF and FAO are implementing the global project on land degradation assessment. UNEP and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat are

collaborating on a project on land degradation assessment in drylands, aimed to provide standardized information and methodologies for land degradation assessment at the national, regional and global levels.

72. UNDP implements a number of GEF-funded forest conservation projects in countries with low forest cover. In addition, through its Dryland Development Centre, UNDP has assisted many countries in the development and implementation of national action plans under the Convention to mitigate land degradation and adverse effects of drought.

73. The designation of land degradation as a focal area for GEF in 2003 is expected to enhance opportunities for countries with low forest cover.

Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests

74. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members are actively collaborating on many activities related to this element, including those of the Global Partnership on Landscape Restoration, and initiatives on planted forests, secondary forests, agroforestry, and trees outside forests.

75. In 2003, ITTO, FAO, CIFOR, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat and IUFRO supported a Forum country and organization-led initiative, the Expert Meeting on Maximizing the Role of Planted Forests in Sustainable Forest Management, held in Wellington, from 25 to 27 March 2003. Furthermore, CIFOR, FAO and collaborators have issued a publication on partnerships between corporate and smallholder partners, primarily related to planted forest development. As a result of the meeting, CIFOR, FAO and others are developing practical guidelines on this topic. ITTO will also be conducting a market study on tropical plantation timber in 2004.

76. Several Partnership members are members of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, including IUCN, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, FAO, ITTO, CIFOR, the World Bank Programme on Forests, ICRAF, UNEP-World Climate Monitoring Centre and the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat. The Global Partnership is a network of Governments, organizations, communities and individuals who recognize the importance of forest landscape restoration and want to be part of a coordinated global effort to promote it. The Global Partnership is organizing a workshop on forest landscape restoration, to be held in early 2005, as a Forum country and organization-led initiative. Several regional workshops were held in 2003 under the umbrella of the Global Partnership.

77. FAO and the National Reference Centre for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (Netherlands), in collaboration with IUCN, CIFOR and others, organized a workshop on "Tropical Secondary Forest Management for Francophone Africa: reality and perspectives", which was held in Douala, Cameroon, in November 2003. ITTO will shortly start working on the publication of "practical guidelines" for the management of secondary forests and will collaborate closely with FAO, CIFOR, IUCN and others in doing so.

78. The fourth Africa-Asia Forum on Combating Desertification was organized in Cotonou, in June 2003, to stimulate interregional cooperation between Africa and Asia, particularly in agroforestry and soil conservation. Following the Forum, the

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat, in collaboration with others, organized regional workshops in Botswana, India and Peru.

79. ICRAF, with many partners, will convene the first World Agroforestry Congress in Orlando, Florida, United States, from 26 to 30 June 2004.

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

80. Many Partnership members work towards this important goal, which cuts across many Forum elements.

81. FAO and UNEP undertake outlook studies such as the FAO Global Forestry Outlook Study, and the UNEP Global Environmental Outlook.

82. FAO also assists developing countries through regional forest sector outlook studies, regional criteria and indicators processes, and, along with other partners, through the National Forest Programme Facility. In 2003, FAO published the Forestry Outlook Study for Africa and is conducting similar exercises in the Near East and Western Asia region and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Financial resources

83. The Partnership's major initiative related to financial resources is the web-based Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management (see sect. III above). Other activities related to this element include studies and publications.

84. GEF is the financial mechanism for all the three Rio Conventions and UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank serve as its implementing agencies. Considerable collaboration exists among these partners on several GEF forest projects. The GEF secretariat has recently published a report, entitled "Review of financial arrangements in GEF-supported biodiversity projects". In addition, in 2003, GEF released a report, entitled "Forests matters: GEF's contribution to conserving and sustaining forest ecosystems", which provides an overview of the GEF forest programme. As at June 2003, GEF had committed more than $777 million for environmental projects that address threats to forests. This funding leveraged nearly $2 billion in partner co-financing.

85. The Global Mechanism under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification will focus on the mobilization of financial resources for co-funding projects on land degradation, including those related to the GEF Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management.

86. ITTO continues to mobilize financial resources for the sustainable management of tropical forests through its policy work and project activities. Since its establishment in late 1986, ITTO has mobilized some US$ 250 million to fund more than 500 projects and activities through its own mechanisms, including the ITTO Special Account and the Bali Partnership Fund.

International trade and sustainable forest management

87. ITTO continues to promote international trade in tropical timber, including trade from sustainably managed sources. It monitors developments in relation to the Doha Development Agenda that are relevant to the trade in forest products and assesses the impacts of forest and timber certification.

88. ITTO and FAO are collaborating on several initiatives related to trade and sustainable forest management, including a major project entitled "Impact assessment of forest products trade in the promotion of sustainable forest management". The project aims to identify the dynamics between trade and forest management and to analyse market forces in order to work more effectively towards sustainable livelihoods and to sustain the forest resource base. FAO organized the expert consultation "Trade and sustainable forest management: impacts and interactions" in Rome from 3 to 5 February 2003, which was attended by several Partnership members and other key international organizations, including ITTO, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

89. In the field of forest and timber certification, ITTO has, in collaboration with relevant organizations, conducted three regional workshops on phased approaches to certification and has finalized a study on the potential role of phased approaches to certification in tropical timber-producing countries. Follow-up work on phased approaches to certification is being undertaken. ITTO, in collaboration with other partners, will be co-sponsoring an international symposium on the impacts of forest certification in developing countries and emerging economies. In addition, FAO, in cooperation with ITTO, facilitated an informal meeting with major national and international forest certification schemes in June 2003 in Borgo Spante, Italy. The aim of the meeting was to increase mutual understanding on approaches for forest certification.

International cooperation in capacity-building and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

90. International cooperation in capacity-building and the transfer of technology is an essential part of the work of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members in support of sustainable forest management. Efforts range from forest extension services, capacity-building for national forest assessments and support to United Nations Forum on Forests country and organization-led initiatives on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

91. FAO collaborates with IUFRO on forest extension. The IUFRO Extension Working Party organized an international symposium entitled "Forestry extension: building capacity through collaboration", held in Troutdale, Oregon, United States, from 28 September to 3 October 2003.

92. FAO, CIFOR and IUCN are collaborating on a series of capacity-building workshops on forests and climate change, especially in Latin America. In addition, FAO intends to collaborate with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat to build capacity for information collection, analysis and dissemination for forest-related carbon inventories.

93. FAO, in collaboration with the Inter-African Forest Industries Association, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the African Timber Organization, the International Model Forest Network Secretariat, ITTO and IUCN, has recently identified successful approaches to forest conservation and sustainable forest management in tropical forests in Central Africa. This initiative aims to promote best practices at the local level and to replicate promising approaches. A similar search for excellence is under way in the Asia-Pacific region.

94. Regarding environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management, ITTO, FAO and the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat supported a Forum country-led initiative on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for mangrove forests, sponsored by the Government of Nicaragua and held in Managua from 3 to 5 March 2003.

95. Several Collaborative Partnership on Forests members participated in the Forum's ad hoc expert group on financing and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, held in Geneva from 15 to 19 December 2003.

96. CIFOR, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, ITTO, FAO, IUCN, ICRAF and others co-sponsored and gave technical support to the global workshop on transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building for sustainable forest management, as a Forum country-led initiative, held in Brazzaville from 24 to 28 February 2004.

Forest biological diversity

97. Forest biological diversity is an issue cutting across several United Nations Forum on Forests elements and many IPF/IFF proposals for action are related to it. Several Partnership members are working to enhance the conservation of forest biological diversity.

98. Through current programmes, several Partnership members support implementation of the CBD expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, the Convention's secretariat, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, FAO, the World Bank Programme on Forests and IUCN have worked to clarify the relationship between the concept of the ecosystem approach and that of sustainable forest management (see sect. V below). Based on their considerable inputs, the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention agreed that sustainable forest management, as developed within the framework of the Forest Principles, could be considered as a means of applying the ecosystem approach to forests.

V. Linkages to other international processes

99. In 2003, several gatherings highlighted a global commitment to forests: the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the sixteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, the twelfth World Forestry Congress, the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, among others. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests commitment to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues is evident in the decisions adopted by several of their governing bodies.

Twenty-second session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

100. The twenty-second session of the UNEP Governing Council was held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 February 2003. The session focused on a range of topics, including emerging policy issues, the role of civil society, global environmental

governance, linkages among environment-related conventions, and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It also addressed coordination and cooperation within and outside the United Nations system, follow-up to post-Summit General Assembly resolutions and the UNEP contribution to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

101. Enhancing the role of UNEP on forest-related issues was discussed during the session and in its decision 22/5 the Governing Council recalled an earlier decision to continue supporting the multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and stressed the need to implement the IPF/IFF proposal for action, particularly in developing countries with low forest cover. The Council requested UNEP, in collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, to cooperate with other organizations to support the work of the Tehran process and its secretariat to strengthen the capacity of low forest cover countries.

Sixteenth session of the Committee on Forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

102. The sixteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry was held in Rome from 10 to 14 March 2003 and many Collaborative Partnership on Forests members participated. Discussions highlighted the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, particularly in relation to the role of the Regional Forestry Commissions in implementing IPF/IFF proposals for action; FAO support to the Forum; and FAO work in cross-cutting areas. Member countries recommended that FAO:

- Enhance efforts to help mobilize resources for countries to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including by assisting countries to assess and prioritize them, and by providing information on sources of funding
- Regional Forestry Commissions facilitate the flow of information between the United Nations Forum on Forests and countries
- Continue to strengthen its support to the Forum, play a leadership role in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and continue to work closely with the other members of the Partnership.

103. In response to recommendations of the Committee on Forestry, and consistent with the outcome of the Forum ad hoc expert group on monitoring, assessment and reporting, FAO is organizing workshops in 2004, in conjunction with regional forestry commissions meetings, to advance the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and to better prepare countries to participate in the international dialogue.

Sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

104. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties met in Havana, from 25 August to 5 September 2003. The United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests were highlighted during discussions on relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies. In decision 12/COP6, the session highlighted the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat's membership in the Partnership and requested it, in collaboration with the Forum and

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity secretariats to work with low forest cover countries on a joint approach on forests and, inter alia, to cooperate with the Tehran process and its secretariat to strengthen the capacity of those countries to combat desertification, land degradation and deforestation.

Twelfth World Forestry Congress

105. The twelfth World Forestry Congress, which was held in Québec City, Canada, from 21 to 28 September 2003, attracted some 4,000 participants from more than 140 countries. A wide range of forest stakeholders exchanged views and experiences and formulated recommendations for implementation at the national, regional and global levels on the theme, "Forests, source of life". The Congress also produced an overview and a statement on forests and forestry to discern trends, adapt policies and raise awareness of key forest-related issues among decision makers, the public and others concerned. Nearly all Collaborative Partnership on Forests members participated in the Congress, presenting papers and holding side events.

Forest-related meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity

106. Several activities were carried out in 2003 in response to Convention decision VI/22, which includes the expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, adopted in April 2002. Partnership members participated in Convention on Biological Diversity workshops and expert group meetings, and are providing input to the Convention, as detailed below.

107. Several Partnership members participated in the Expert Meeting on the Further Elaboration, and Guidelines for Implementation, of the Ecosystem Approach in Montreal, Canada, from 7 to 11 July 2003. Of particular relevance to Partnership members was discussion of the concept of the ecosystem approach in relation to sustainable forest management.

108. Several Partnership members also participated in the International Workshop on Protected Forest Areas held in Montreal, Canada, from 6 to 8 November 2003. Outcomes were presented at the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Montreal from 10 to 14 November 2003, and focused on protected areas, among other topics.

109. Many Partnership members attended the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the Review of Implementation of the Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, held in Montpellier, France, from 24 to 27 November 2003. The meeting provided technical and scientific input to the review of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity. This is relevant to United Nations Forum on Forests discussions on monitoring, assessment and reporting, the work of the Forum's ad hoc expert group on this topic, and Partnership efforts to streamline forest-related reporting.

Thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions of the International Tropical Timber Council

110. In 2003, the International Tropical Timber Council held its thirty-fourth session in Panama City in May and its thirty-fifth session in Yokohama, Japan, in

November. Of relevance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Council decided to:

- Approve an International Tropical Timber Organization secondment to the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat
- Strengthen the Asia Forest Partnership
- Prepare for the negotiation of a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994
- Collaborate with Collaborative Partnership on Forests partners on Forum country and organization-led initiatives and other projects highlighted in section IV.

Ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

111. The ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003, will be remembered as the "Forest COP" where, after much debate, the parties established rules and modalities for afforestation and reforestation under the Clean Development Mechanism. Other forest-related issues discussed were good practice guidance for land use, land-use change and forestry, reporting tables for greenhouse gas inventories for the land use, land-use change and forestry sector, harvested wood products and degradation of forests and devegetation of other vegetation types. With forests high on the agenda at the meeting, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests organized a side event to highlight joint activities (see sect. III above).

112. IUCN, UNEP and FAO supported the participation of delegates from Africa, Asia and Latin America in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations on afforestation and reforestation under the Clean Development Mechanism. The three institutions jointly organized several regional meetings in 2003 to provide a neutral forum for delegates to prepare for those negotiations.

Notes

[1] The CPF Frameworks 2002 and 2003 are available on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site: www.fao.org/forestry/cpf.

[2] The Collaborative Partnership on Forests policy document (revised in July 2003) is available on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site: www.fao.org/forestry/cpf.

[3] The Collaborative Partnership on Forests Network concept paper (revised in September 2002) outlines the purpose and working modalities of the Network. The paper is available on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site: www.fao.org/forestry/cpf.

[4] Implementing the Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests: a tool to assist national-level assessment of progress and priorities for action towards sustainable forest management, developed in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, available at http://www.profor.info/pubs/austproforsum.htm.